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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2872
INFO RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
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RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5231
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2969
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2834
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3475
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
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SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN; EEB
ENERGY FOR EKIMOFF/THOMPSON
COMMERCE FOR HUEPER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EPET](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EINV](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN SEES NEUTRALITY AS PART OF ENERGY DIPLOMACY

1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

2. (SBU) SUMMARY: On May 21, state-controlled newspaper "Neytralny Turkmenistan" published an op-ed by a Turkmen MFA official outlining the main objectives, directions, and energy diplomacy component of Turkmenistan's foreign policy. A number of international media outlets reported on this article, speculating that it might represent a change in Turkmenistan's priorities in international affairs. While the article does not describe a significant course change for Turkmen foreign policy, it does outline the manner in which the country's neutrality will allow it to balance its energy export partnerships while deciding future export routes from a commercial, rather than political viewpoint. END SUMMARY.

3. (SBU) The article starts with a long-winded discourse about how the foreign policy of a state increasingly serves as a tool for achieving economic, social, scientific, cultural and humanitarian goals. The author urges Turkmenistan to make use of its sovereign strengths such as neutrality, hydrocarbon resources, geographic location, and peacemaking experience in its foreign policy. The article states that Turkmenistan has decided to engage in full-scale cooperation with the world community and to "integrate into the global development process based on a thorough analysis of current trends in the international arena." The article added that President Berdimuhamedov's speech at the 2007 UNGA session became the starting point in Turkmenistan's new foreign policy strategy.

4. (SBU) The article emphasized that Turkmenistan would continue to base its foreign policy on the country's neutrality, but more attention will be directed in the near term to the economic and geo-economic elements of neutrality. Turkmenistan will continue to promote the development of an internationally-recognized approach to energy security, according to the author, because "various factors" can make bilateral agreements "very vulnerable."

5. (SBU) The article also stated that Turkmenistan will remain committed to the principle of energy route diversification and asserted that neutrality will protect the country's efforts to diversify its export options against political pressure. The author noted that Turkmenistan considers its energy wealth and geographic

location to be positive factors that help "maintain a balance of interests" in the Eurasian energy market, by giving a variety of partners equal access to Turkmen energy resources and infrastructure. This policy position, added the author, influences Turkmenistan's foreign policy decision making and initiatives on energy issues.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: The article was certainly reviewed at the highest levels of government before appearing in Neytralny Turkmenistan, and should be considered an official government statement. It was worded carefully, using sophisticated political and diplomatic terminology, and was likely intended for foreign analysts as well as the Turkmen audience. It does not, however, contain indications of any sharp change in Turkmenistan's foreign policy, nor does it suggest that Turkmenistan prefers a Western direction for energy exports over others. The new twist in policy that this article explains is the idea that neutrality is a key element of Turkmenistan's energy diplomacy. This may, then, indicate that Turkmenistan will lean on its neutrality when considering the various options and directions for its gas exports, and will not consider previous gas agreements with Russia as a sufficient reason to give Russia the priority when deciding on new routes. END COMMENT.

MILES